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REPORT TO THE 61st MONTANA LEGISLATURE

SHEEP, MOOSE, MULE DEER, ELK AND MOUNTAIN GOAT AUCTION LICENSE ACCOUNTS

PREPARED BY
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The 49th Montana State Legislature authorized the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission to auction one male sheep license each year to provide for the benefit of sheep. The 50th Montana State Legislature authorized the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission to auction one male Shiras moose license each year to provide for the benefit of moose. The 58th Montana State Legislature's provided authority for the sale of one male mule deer and one male elk auction/lottery license, and the 59th session provided authority for one mountain goat auction/lottery license. Rules and procedures to conduct the auction have been adopted by the commission each year and have been expanded to include all five species now available. The auction/lottery license rules provide for FWP to solicit proposals to conduct the auctions (and or lottery if appropriate) from conservation organizations involved in the conservation and management of these big game species. The commission reviews the proposals and selects an organization to conduct the auctions. Organizations can submit bids to conduct more than one species auction. Organizations that have been selected to auction the various species licenses for 1997-2006 are summarized in Table 1 and include the Boone and Crocket Club, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Mule Deer Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Montana Outfitter and Guides Association, and Skyline Sportsmen Association. Safari Club International (including the MT Chapter) has participated in the moose auction prior to 1997. The successful bidder for each of the auction licenses is allowed to hunt for a legal animal during the open season in any of the legally described species hunting districts as described in the appropriate hunting regulation.

Table 1. License Auction Sales History

Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount	Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount
Sheep	97	FNAWS	238,000	Moose	97	RMEF	17,000
	98	FNAWS	300,000		98	MOGA	14,000
	99	FNAWS	130,000		99	SSA	10,000
	00	FNAWS	95,000		00	SSA	11,000
	01	FNAWS	100,000		01	MOGA	13,500
	02	FNAWS	90,000		02	RMEF	20,000
	03	FNAWS	132,500		03	RMEF	19,000
	04	FNAWS	160,000		04	SSA	17,250
	05	FNAWS	160,000		05	BCC	15,000
	06	FNAWS	115,000		06	BCC	13,000
	07	FNAWS	140,000		07	FNAWS	20,000
	08	FNAWS	195,000		08	FNAWS	12,500
TOTAL			**3,455,500**	**TOTAL**			**275,000**

Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount	Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount
Mule	04	MDF	6,250	Elk	04	RMEF	20,000
Deer	05	MDF	6,700		05	RMEF	23,000
	06	MDF	13,000		06	RMEF	36,000
	07	MDF	15,000		07	RMEF	27,000
	08	MDF	13,500		08	RMEF	17,000
TOTAL			**54,450**	**TOTAL**			**123,000**

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Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount
Mtn	06	RMEF	13,500
Goat	07	RMEF	9,000
	08	RMEF	9,000
TOTAL			**13,500**

BBC = Boone & Crockett Club
FNAWS = Foundation for North American Wild Sheep
MDF = Mule Deer Foundation
MOGA = Montana Outfitters & Guides Association
RMEF = Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
SSA = Skyline Sportsmens Association

Revenues for bighorn sheep and Shiras moose auction licenses have fluctuated over time but remain very competitive with other western states, especially the bighorn sheep license. Revenues for both the mule deer and elk auction licenses decreased in the most recent year but the extensive opportunity afforded to the elk license holder in particular may help further increase those revenues over time. The mountain goat license was auctioned for the first time in 2006 and auction amounts have remained constant the last two years.

Budgeted Allocations and Expenditures:

As prescribed by enabling legislation, funding is to be used for the beneficial management of the identified species. Funding is typically allocated for specific survey work to deal with localized issues, capture and relocation efforts, research efforts, habitat enhancement and herd health issues or in the case of bighorn sheep, a portion of the funding is allocated to a capital account for habitat protection. For FY06–07, funding by species was allocated as follows:

BIG GAME AUCTION EXPENDITURES FY06 - FY07 BIENNIUM

	FY06	FY07	TOTAL
Mountain Sheep Auction - Work	$ 46,695.00	$ 53,815.17	**$ 100,510.17**
Mountain Sheep Auction – Capital	$ 302,202.94	$ 4,579.80	**$ 306,782.74**
Mountain Sheep Auction – Commission	$ 11,500.00	$ 14,000.00	**$ 25,500.00**
TOTAL	**$ 360,397.94**	**$ 72,394.97**	**$ 432,792.91**
Moose Auction - Field Work	$ 1,206.23	$ 676.37	**$ 1,882.60**
Moose Auction – Commission	$ 1,300.00	$ 2,000.00	**$ 3,300.00**
TOTAL	**$ 2,506.23**	**$ 2,676.97**	**$ 5,183.20**
Mule Deer Auction - Field Work	$ 150.45	$ -	**$ 150.45**
Mule Deer Auction – Commission	$ 1,300.00	$ 1,500.00	**$ 2,800.00**
TOTAL	**$ 625.00**	**$ 825.00**	**$ 1,450.00**
Elk Auction - Field Work	$ -	$ -	**$ -**
Elk Auction – Commission	$ 3,600.00	$ 2,700.00	**$ 6,300.00**
TOTAL	**$ 3,600.00**	**$ 2,700.00**	**$ 6,300.00**

Goat Auction - Field Work		$ -	$ -	$ -
Goat Auction – Commission		$ 1,350.00	$ 900.00	$ 2,250.00
	TOTAL	**$ 1,350.00**	**$ 900.00**	**$ 2,250.00**

Accomplishments:
Fieldwork included population monitoring, capture and relocation, and collection of herd health parameters. This fieldwork is summarized below.

Bighorn Sheep Capture and Herd Health

2006: Net gunning was used to capture 40 sheep in the Missouri River Breaks and these animals were relocated to North Dakota (20) and Wyoming (20). Receiving states were responsible for capture costs. A total of 30 sheep were captured in the Sleeping Giant area and released as part of a bighorn/domestic sheep interface study. Finally, 27 sheep were ground darted near Anaconda, again part of bighorn/domestic sheep interface study. All animals were sampled for herd health parameters.

2007: Net gunning was used to capture 181 sheep from the Rock Creek, Lower Blackfoot and East Fork of the Bitterroot areas of R2 and translocated to Utah (107), Nebraska (32) and Wyoming (42). Each receiving state was responsible for capture costs. An additional 18 were captured in the Ruby Mountains and 17 were transplanted to the Highlands (1 mortality). All sheep were tested for herd health parameters.

Moose:
Authorized activities included a work-study contract with MSU (Centennial Valley moose population assessment) and limited aerial survey work on the Mt. Haggin WMA.

Mule Deer:
Minimal expenditures were authorized.

Elk:
No authorized expenditures

Mountain Goat
No authorized expenditures

Bighorn Sheep Capital Program Projects
Approximately 156 acres of sheep winter range near Anaconda, MT were acquired using auction license dollars to create the Blue-Eyed Nellie Wildlife Management Area. Other partners in the acquisition included FNAWS and Anaconda Sportsmen Club.